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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION

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May 28, 2002

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MINUTES OF THE MAY 28, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Brammer, Haber, Maheu, Milewski, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 9:49 a.m. Commissioners' Gomeau, Kowalski, McDonald. and Vendetta were excused. Staff members Morrisette, O'Neil, Ouellette, Piechota and Piskura were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Guests to the meeting were identified as Chester J. Haber, Director, Hartford County Regional Fire School; Chris Frances, WTIC Radio; Daniel Craig, Director, FEMA - Region 1, Janice Melton, Public Information Officer, FEMA – Region 1 and Robert Waters, FEMA – Region 1.

Chairman Carozza called on Mr. Piskura to introduce the guests to the meeting.

Mr. Piskura introduced Dan Craig, Director, FEMA – Region 1 representing all of the New England states.

Mr. Craig introduced his associates Bob Waters who is acting as FEMA Region I's fire point of contact. He is a former Deputy Chief from Providence and Chief in Wellsley, Mass. He also introduced Janice Melton, Public Information Officer. Mr. Craig stated that he wanted to be here today to introduce himself and to let the Commission know how important the fire service is to FEMA. FEMA Director Albaugh has made it one of his priorities to get FEMA more in touch with the fire service to make sure, as the first responders and the legs of the FEMA army that we have what we need. One of the priorities has been the FIRE Act grant Program started at FEMA last year for \$100 million. This year it's \$360 million. Mr. Craig stated that Connecticut had probably the highest percentage of applicants in reference to the number of fire departments in the state. The State of Connecticut had 229 applicants for the fire grant this year. He expressed his thanks for making this a priority and thanked Mr. Waters who traveled not only to Connecticut but also the to other New England states giving over 40 presentations. He presented a grant writing workshop at the Mohegan

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Sun that had 200 attendees that was quite impressive. Director Albaugh went through some fire service training in Maryland and was very impressed and strongly recommends that the Regional Directors do the same. Mr. Craig gave a brief overview of some of the major activities FEMA is currently involved in. In closing he stated that he also looked forward to speaking with the Recruit graduating class tomorrow.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if grant monies not used by a department would go back in the fund.

Mr. Craig stated that the first year funding allocated by Congress has to be used by September 30. It can't go back into the fund to be used by another department.

Commissioner Stankye inquired whether departments who are not using their grant allocation is a national problem.

Mr. Craig stated that to date about 25% of the departments have not spent their grant money.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired if the \$3.5 billion grant money was for fire service only or all emergency responders.

Mr. Craig stated that the grant money was for all first responders (fire service, police and EMS).

Commissioner Maheu stated that Mr. Craig indicated that in the future, funding may be available to state organizations. Does that mean that the Fire Academy will be able to apply as one entity and the Fire Marshal as a separate entity?

Mr. Craig stated that the state itself would be one entity.

Chairman Carozza stated that on behalf of the Commission he thanked Mr. Craig for attending the meeting and encouraged him to contact us if we could be of further assistance.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the minutes of April 30, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brammer to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2001 meeting.

Commissioner Nicol inquired about the last paragraph of the draft minutes that indicates Chairman Carozza closed the meeting.

The Executive Secretary indicated that this error had been corrected.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that in paragraph 10 on Page 6, it indicates that he made a statement but it should indicate that he asked a question.

Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2001 to May 14, 2001.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to approve the Staff Report for the period of April 15, 2001 to May 14, 2001. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza stated if there was no objection he would like to move to New Business item 5 b.) first and then on to item 5 a.).

Reporting on agenda item 5 b.) Mr. Piskura stated that he wanted to share with the Commission two significant initiatives undertaken by the Training Division. One item pertains to Cox Cable approaching the State Fire Marshal's Office on an issue related to their standby power systems. The Fire Marshal's Office then passed the issue onto the Academy. The Department of Public Utilities' Control gave Cox Cable a directive regarding training for emergency services personnel on standby power systems that are randomly placed and propane powered. When a local fire department responds to a collision or some kind of emergency around a pole they should be made aware of potential hazards such as propane cylinders and other mechanism that they may have to deal with. Some Training staff are working with Cox to develop a power point presentation for those fire departments that are in their franchise area. We believe once finished we will be able to expand the program statewide.

The second initiative is actually an outcropping of the World Trade Center collapse. An architect who represents a disabled group of Americans contacted the Training Division. His concern was specifically with a high rise building emergency and whether fire departments know what to do with people seeking safety in areas of refuge. After a lot of conversation, it became very clear that due to staffing issues, whether it be career or volunteer, it didn't matter that when someone's in an area of refuge more than likely they will be left there until the event is over. As far as training goes we very likely cover areas of refuge. We only offer about two high rise fire classes a year that are probably attended by about 25-30 students. Those students, typically are not supervisory students, they're firefighters. So even though present information to a small group of people is not permeated through the fire department. This group of disabled Americans agreed to allocate up to \$2,000 to develop a power point program to be distributed to the Connecticut fire departments on how to deal with areas of refuge.

Lastly, Mr. Piskura offered his thanks to Bob Waters for going throughout the state to offer grant writing workshops for the FIRE Act grants, he was very well received.

Mr. Morrisette inquired whether Mr. Piskura was soliciting any SOGs or SOPs from fire departments for the area of refuge program.

Mr. Piskura stated that he was utilizing a content expert from lower Fairfield County so if he needs any SOGs or SOPs he can get them from departments in that area if he needs them.

Moving to item 5 a.) Mr. Morrisette introduced Chester Haber, Director of the Hartford County Fire Emergency Plan's Training who is here for a presentation on their contribution to the Academy.

Mr. Haber stated that they undertook a project over a year ago to improve the drafting pit. Testing was done to determine deficiencies before remodeling work was done. He described all the work that was done to upgrade the drafting pit and invited Commissioners to go out to the training ground to view the changes that were made. He reported that they received a lot of donated material from companies and his staff completed the work over a period of many weekends.

Chairman Carozza called for a short recess at 10:00 a.m. to permit Commissioners to view first hand the drafting pit upgrade.

Chairman Carozza called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. and moved to item 4 a.) on the agenda.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Memorial Committee was meeting on a biweekly basis as construction continues. They have a tentative date scheduled for a dedication ceremony that being Sunday, August 18 at 2:00 p.m. The Chairman of the committee is checking with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's Office as to their availability that date. It looks like the main stone may be delivered within the next week or two and actually could be during the June Fire School week. The stone will be put in place and will remain covered until the dedication.

Moving to item 4 b.) Commissioner Wilkinson gave an update on the CSFA Education Committee. He stated that the committee met last month with the consultants in attendance. The consultants had some preliminary draft drawings of the different facilities that they envision for the regional schools. He stated that he had the drawings with him if anyone was interested to look at them after the meeting. What is good about the drawings is that they are very generic and can be modified to a certain extent to address the needs of a particular school. As an example, a school may be able to opt for a five-story tower in lieu of a four-story. Another committee meeting is scheduled for June 13. At that point the draft recommendations from the consultants will be delivered to the community for perusal and comments. The plan is that the final report will be issued in early July. Everything seems to be on track and moving along as everyone hoped it to be.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the draft documents were included in the Commission packages for information.

Moving to item 4 c.) Mr. Morrisette stated that the Senior Steering Council has not met since the last Commission meeting. One item that will probably be on the next agenda would be the approval of the grant funding scheme set up for the current fiscal year. This would entail funding going primarily to regional or cooperative arrangements between communities.

Moving to item 4 d.) Mr. Morrisette made reference to the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) distributed to Commissioners. This draft MOU was worked on with the Office of The Attorney General. The MOU is for the Statewide Disaster Response Plan. As you may recall the Connecticut Fire Chief's Association in cooperation with this office has been developing a plan and as stated previously in order to participate in the plan an MOU will need to be executed. The MOU was recently posted on our Web Page in hopes we would obtain comments from fire departments. What we are most concerned about is whether departments will have difficulty passing this through their legal counsel. The Chief's Association will be mailing to all of the county organizations a letter

indicating that they would like to move the plan forward. In addition, they are also seeking representatives from these organizations that want to be part of the plan.

Commissioner Nicol inquired whether the MOU was developed in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office.

Mr. Morrisette replied affirmatively.

Moving to item 4 e.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) distribution. He indicated about 50% of the cameras have been distributed. We're receiving cameras on a daily basis from one of the vendors. Those cameras are being distributed as quickly as possible. A press conference with the Governor was held in Stamford two weeks ago highlighting the program. He is looking to do possibly one or two other press conferences in the coming weeks.

Moving to item 4 f.) Commissioner Johnson gave an update on the Regional Foam Trailer Program. He stated that the sub-committee met on Friday of last week to review the bids and it was recommended the bid be awarded to United Plastics Fabricating of Massachusetts. The sub-committee will order four trailers with the available funding and plans to place the trailers in New London, Hartford, New Haven and Fairfield County areas.

Mr. Morrisette stated in terms of available funding we are about \$12,000 short of purchasing a fifth unit. An inquiry has been made to determine whether any additional money is available. If funding becomes available we will probably look to place a trailer somewhere in the Danbury area.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired about the number of units that will be purchased.

Mr. Morrisette stated that four units would be purchased possibly five if an additional \$12,000 is made available.

Moving to item 4 g.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update regarding a discussion on freelancing and ethics. He stated that he received support from the Ethics Commission to offer educational outreach sessions for our employees, both full and part-time. These sessions are being scheduled for June 18 and June 27. Afternoon and evening session are planned for both dates. A letter announcing the sessions along with the Guide to the Code of Ethics will be mailed to all employees soon.

Commissioner Wilkinson inquired if it would be possible to notify the Commissioners of these sessions.

Moving to item 4 h.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the State USAR Team initiative. A full advisory board meeting is scheduled for later this week. The various working groups continue to meet and some substantial progress is being made. All of the position classifications have been solidified and the required knowledge, skills and abilities approved. It is expected that sometime this summer the positions will be advertised, at which time selections will commence over the fall. Right now the biggest question is whether funding was available for this effort. They are looking to possibly use some of the federal monies from the proposed \$3.5 billion to potentially fund this operation.

A discussion period followed regarding funding for the State USAR Team initiative.

Moving to item 4 i.) Mr. Piechota stated that at the request of the Commission he conducted an investigation of experiential assessment process for the purpose of certification. On occasion the Certification Division receives requests from individuals seeking to substitute their experience for testing for the purposes of certification. He stated that the State of Maryland has such a system and he gave an overview of how the system works.

A discussion period followed.

Chairman Carozza asked Mr. Piechota to keep the Commission informed as he learns more about the experiential assessment process.

Mr. Piechota stated that he hopes to have some printed documentation from the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute by the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if any other states have a similar program and if Mr. Piechota could do a search over the Internet.

Mr. Piechota stated that he certainly could do that, but at the last Pro-Board Conference he attended, when this concept was put forward to the membership, only Maryland indicated they were doing it. He stated that at an IFSAC Annual Conference last month there was a small amount of discussion on this subject and nobody indicated other than Maryland.

Commissioner Nicol asked if an inquiry could be made with neighboring states to see if there is any interest in doing something on a regional basis with the New England states or Tri-State area with New York, New Jersey,

Mr. Piechota stated that each state is so different in their process it would be extremely difficult for us and Massachusetts and Rhode Island to meld our systems together so that one could recognize what the other state was doing. Within the Pro-Board system there is reciprocity.

Commissioner Maheu inquired if Maryland has any data that indicates whether any individuals from Connecticut have gone through this process.

Mr. Piechota stated that he would inquire.

Moving to item 5 a.) Chairman Carozza stated that on behalf of the Commission he would like to thank Mr. Chet Haber and the Hartford County Emergency Plan for all the work in the renovation of the drafting pit.

Mr. Morrisette stated he intends to present the Hartford County Emergency Plan with a certificate of appreciation at their annual dinner on June 19.

Moving to item 5 c) Mr. Morrisette stated that he recently received a letter from George Pohorilak of the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications. George is currently serving as the Chairman

of the New England 700 Mhz Planning Committee. As the television stations begin going over to High Definition Television they will be foregoing some of their frequencies by the year 2006. The 700 Mhz spectrum will open up to the fire service. As part of this New England Planning Committee he has been tasked to put together a working group of individuals from the various emergency service disciplines to participate in planning activities. He is looking for the Commission as the fire service contact entity to submit the name of an individual who can represent the fire service on the 700 Mhz Planning Committee. He goes on to say in his letter, if we do not have a representative the position will revert to an at large membership for Connecticut. Their next planning meeting is scheduled for June 11 in New Hampshire. Mr. Pohorilak was planning to attend today's Commission meeting if time permitted to give more detail. Mr. Morrisette asked Commissioners for suggestions or interest to serve.

Commissioner Stankye inquired if Mr. Pohorilak recommended anybody.

Mr. Morrisette stated that Mr. Pohorilak mentioned Chief Tom Weber from Manchester. However because he will become President of the Fire Chiefs Association he will probably not have the time. He also suggested John Gustafson from New Haven CMED who is also a volunteer in Hamden. Mr. Morrisette stated that he spoke with Mike Varney the Chief in Ellington who has been serving on the Statewide Technical Advisory Committee. Those are a few names of potential participants unless somebody here has a suggestion.

Commissioner Nicol asked Mr. Morrisette if he had any room on his plate.

Mr. Morrisette replied negatively.

A discussion period followed.

Commissioner Maheu stated that John Gustafson is a highly qualified individual to serve on this committee and does know the fire service, he would serve well in terms of our interests.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he was in agreement with Commissioner Maheu that John Gustafson is a highly qualified individual.

Mr. Morrisette stated that another suggestion would be that Chief Varney might be willing to serve as an alternate.

Chairman Carozza asked Mr. Morrisette to contact Messrs. Gustafson and Varney.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the Firefighter Memorial Committee had given any thought to contacting the various fire service organizations to request assistance for the dedication ceremony.

Mr. Morrisette stated that at the last meeting Chairman Herrick indicated that he would be checking with the Administration to solidify the ceremony date. Once we know the date we can begin getting the word out. A meeting was held after the construction meeting to review a plan for the actual event and plan to mirror the groundbreaking ceremony.

Commissioner Haber stated that the letter of invitation is already 99% drafted and waiting for confirmation with the Governor's Office regarding the date. We also need a website address for attendees to RSVP.

Commissioner Nicol inquired if the Committee had adequate funds for the dedication ceremony.

Commissioner Haber stated that the refreshments for the event will be donated by Hartford County Emergency Plan and the Windsor Locks Fire Department.

Commissioner Nicol asked that he be informed if additional financial support is needed and stated that he would be willing to ask the CFDIA membership for support.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that he indicated to Mr. Herrick last month that if there was anything that was needed to let him know so that he could approach the CFDIA membership to obtain some funding.

Commissioner Maheu asked if the Commission minutes were posted on the Internet prior to the Commission's approval.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Commission minutes were posted as a draft.

Mr. Piechota stated that the state was embarking in a redesign of their Web Internet presence. The state's home page is being redesigned to make it more user friendly and all state agencies that have a web presence must follow certain formatting guidelines. Thus, our web site will be completely redesigned. We're very fortunate that DOIT has chosen us as one of the pilot agencies to do the make over. The web page will have a completely different look but it will be more agency friendly in that we will not have to hire a dedicated computer technician to create the content for this.

Commissioner Maheu inquired if the web addresses would stay the same.

Mr. Piechota stated as far as he knows the addresses will stay the same and if they don't it will be a real gradual phase in over to the new address.

Commissioner Brammer praised Hartford County for their efforts and asked if a tour of the Fire Academy could be scheduled for the Commissioners.

Mr. Morrisette reminded the Commissioners of the recruit graduation scheduled for tomorrow at 1:30 P.M., Dan Craig, Director of FEMA Region I will be a guest speaker at the graduation and he will also attend the Chiefs' meeting this evening in Portland.

Mr. Morrisette informed the Commissioners about two recruits that were dismissed from the current class. They are both from Canada and were dismissed for an altercation that occurred on the evening of May 9, 2002, at the Fire Academy. One individual appealed the dismissal and an appeals hearing was held with the original dismissal order upheld.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Governor's Office has notified us of a hiring freeze. Also, all out-of-state travel must now be approved by the Governor's Office. We must also submit to the Office of Policy and Management a report regarding all contracts or anticipated contracts for next fiscal year.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Auditor has just about completed his work and will be meeting with him this afternoon to go over his findings prior to issuing his report. Commissioners will receive a copy of the report when available.

Commissioner Haber inquired if the dismissed recruits were charged for the cleanup at the Academy.

Mr. Morrisette replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Ouellette asked to have placed on the table for consideration by Commissioners whether it would be a good idea for the names and phone numbers of Commissioners' to be added to the Instructors' Phone Book so that the instructors would know who the Commissioners are.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the Commissioners are listed in the Instructor Phone Book as well as on our Web Page.

Chairman Carozza stated that he wanted to take a moment to recognize the State Fire Administrator for his involvement in a rescue in Wethersfield. Chairman Carozza read from an article regarding two firefighters (Lt. Peter Conroy and Jeff Morrisette) who were honored by the Town of Wethersfield for rescuing a woman from a burning apartment on the Silas Dean Highway three months ago. Chairman Carozza stated that in addition to his position as State Fire Administrator, Mr. Morrisette's daily activities and all he does for this Academy and for the Commission, "job well done Jeff."

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brammer and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 11:15 A.M.